

# Introduction to Bipolar Disorder

## Introduction

Until the twenty-fifth year of my life, I lived more or less in a state of constant anxiety interposed with episodes of suicidal depression. Talking about it now feels like I am referring to somebody else's life or as if it was something I experienced a lifetime ago.

It was only a week after the twenty-fifth birthday that I woke up in the middle of the night with a feeling of absolute dread. It was not the first time that I had woken up with anxiety; I was very familiar with this feeling; however this time it hit me more intensely than ever. Everything around me felt so hostile, so unfamiliar, and so utterly worthless that it filled my heart with a feeling of deep loathing. A loathing for the world and loathing for myself. I questioned myself what was the point of my existence? Why I am continuing to live a life so miserable? Why not just end it? I could feel a deep longing for destruction, for extermination, and for nonexistence developing with so much might in me that it started overcoming my innate desire to continue to live. It was like having an abuser in my head constantly telling me that "I am a burden on Earth". I am unlovable. I am a terrible waste of space and the only thing I am good at is bringing suffering to those I love.

"I cannot continue living with myself causing so much pain to those around me." This thought kept resurfacing in my mind until suddenly I became conscious of what an odd thought it was. Am I a single person or two persons? If I cannot continue living with myself then there ought to be two of me: the 'I' person and the person that 'I' 'cannot live with'. "Perhaps," I reflected, "only one of them is real."

This strange realization stunned my mind for a while and despite being fully conscious, my mind felt empty with no more thoughts in it. Then I got smacked by what felt like a tornado of energy. At first, it was a slow movement that gradually accelerated. My body started shaking badly as an intense fear started gripping me. "Resist nothing," these words reverberated in my head. I started feeling myself being drawn into a void with it filling inside of my body. All of a sudden, there was no more panic, and I let myself collapsed into that void. This miracle was not unanticipated; neither did it happen all at once. I had been reading material on self-help, and mental wellness for the past few months and striving to adopt a healthy routine which assisted me in gradually reprogramming my subconscious mind. Nevertheless, I only experienced this outcome that night in an extremely conscious state of mind.

When Henley penned down the lines that, 'I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul', he meant to enlighten us that we are the masters of our fate, the captains of our soul because WE hold the power to regulate OUR thoughts. It is due to this great truth that we are the Masters of our Fate, the Captains of our Souls; and that this power does not discriminate between constructive and destructive thoughts. It will compel us to translate thoughts of depression into physical reality, just as

strongly and quickly as it will urge us to act upon thoughts of joy.

Human brains become magnetized with the governing thoughts which we carry in our minds, and, by some unfamiliar ways, these “magnets” attract to us such powers, people, and the life situations which harmonize with the nature of our overpowering thoughts. There is no correct version when it comes to perceiving experiences and memory. The version you see as factual is the one you are going to remember most vividly.

Humans tend to attach meaning to everything as they go through life. Several people experiencing the same thing can attach a different meaning to it. Those meanings translate into emotions and eventually, those emotions shape the life we live. So the question is simple:

*Do you want to let these negative emotions and thoughts govern your emotional memory, or do you want to reframe these states and regulate your emotions more positively?*

Having Borderline Personality (BPD) disorder is incredibly painful and exhausting. It is longing for stability yet being unstable in all areas of your life. It is having no emotional brakes leaving you feeling completely out of control. It's like half the time you forget it's even there. You don't see yourself as someone with a disordered personality. You are just a mish-mash of loads of different thoughts, feelings, and emotions, which don't always follow the same pattern as most people. But then the moment comes and hits you over the head like a baseball bat, and you quickly spiral. Your mind is stunned for a moment. Then you are gasping for oxygen. Not necessarily outwardly, but inwardly. Your mind struggles to grasp one thought out of so many racing, horrible thoughts. It's like you have had so many traumatic events that your mind is unable to compute. They all collide in your mind, taking up all the space and yet leaving you feeling completely alone, worthless, and disconnected from people.

Living and dealing with mental illness can be exhausting. When someone with a mental illness utters that they're tired it's generally not a complaint or being pessimistic; it's simply their reality...a fact of their life. When you're diagnosed with BPD, for a while, it is hard to focus on anything else except the fact that you're crazy enough to be called mentally ill, and particularly harder to accept any diagnosis of mental disorder if you've always thought of yourself as a healthy and happy person. The diagnosis seems to loom over your life, and you question yourself if anything will ever be the same again?

All of this may seem frustrating but it's not the end. You can opt to lead a positive and happy life like numerous others who have been in your shoes and gone against the odds to conquer the world. You have to make yourself realize that BPD may be a part of your life, but it is not who you are. Your mental illness does not define you. You can learn to control and accept your emotions. Your battle may be harder than the average person, but you can take control of your life and be happy and be successful—just like anybody else. You will be surprised to know that some of the most

creative minds suffered from BPD and mental illness. Some of their greatest work was conceived and achieved during their darkest times.

Global singer Britney Spears received numerous hits and awards to list. The pop-icon is also popular for her public struggles, and it is only deduced that a few of her issues are similar to the signs of BPD without an official diagnosis. Even though she has struggled with her mental health at times over the years, she continued to be a top-selling singer. Dr. Jamerson, the author of *'An Unquiet Mind'* has earned several awards and published over 100 academic articles. The book is a biography of her own experiences with severe mental illness. She was named one of the "Best Doctors in the United States" and was selected by Time as a "Hero of Medicine." She's known to have helped thousands of people suffering from BPD to lead healthy and happy life.

So whether you have already been identified with BPD, or you suspect yourself for having it, or you are worried about a friend or family member who is diagnosed with it, this book will help you in developing a deep understanding of the disorder and the person suffering from it. You will learn to effectively manage the disorder through medical and psychological treatments. The book will further share insights on self-management techniques as well as lifestyle changes which can help you in dealing with the mood cycles, and improve your functioning in work and family settings. You'll also learn how to modify these treatment or self-management tactics to your life situations.

Having spent 5 years with a person having BPD, I write this book from different perspectives and with unique life experiences. I write it as a young writer living and managing a relationship with a person diagnosed with BPD. I also pen it down as a woman who has adored many with BPD and who has had acquaintances, friends, and dear ones around my life that have exhibited BPD symptoms. It has touched my life in many ways. I know, from my firsthand experience, that without help it is challenging to live and love someone with it. It becomes more challenging when we live in a society where this diagnosis is considered one of the most highly stigmatized ones. I also write this book as someone who has made plenty of mistakes in the past in my interactions with people suffering from it. I understand that it can be equally scary and overwhelming to those who don't have a lot of information about it and who are still having a hard time processing the news that they have been diagnosed with BPD.

As I share my journey of learning and managing BPD, the struggles, the pain, and the triumph associated with it, I want you to remember that healing isn't linear. Neither is it an overnight process. You need to train your mind to be stronger than your emotions or you will lose yourself every time. Getting to know yourself on a deeper level is the first step in understanding your disorder and figuring out your journey to stability with this lifelong illness. Important is to make progress each day. I know that progress is messy, but so is life. Being messy is real and you got to embrace the real. So the question I ask is "are you going to wallow in the weight of your illness,

or are you going to fight for your only life and make it a good story?" To get the answers, keep reading!

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